

LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

MINUTES

August 6, 2015

Pat Manuel
CHAIRMAN

Dan Davis
VICE CHAIRMAN

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

The following constitute minutes of the Commission Meeting
and are not a verbatim transcript of the proceedings.

Tapes of the meetings are kept at the
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

2000 Quail Drive

Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808.

For more information, call (225) 765-2806

AGENDA
LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION
BATON ROUGE, LA
August 6, 2015 9:30 AM

PAGE

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes of July 2, 2015 and July 23, 2015
3. Commission Special Announcements/Personal Privilege
4. To Recognize the Tchefuncte River Foundation River Clean-Up
5. To Hear Enforcement Reports July 2015
6. To Consider a Notice of Intent for Regulations on Saline Lake Game and Fish Preserve and Northwest Louisiana Game and Fish Preserve
7. To Hear a Presentation on Preliminary Results from the 2015 Survey of Louisiana Waterfowl Hunters
8. To Consider a Declaration of Emergency to set the 2015-16 Regular Season Waterfowl Hunting Regulations
9. Set December 2015 Meeting Date
10. Receive Public Comments
11. Adjournment

THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF
LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

Thursday, August 6, 2015

Chairman Pat Manuel presiding

Present:

Pat Manuel

Dan Davis

Billy Broussard

Ed Swindell

Chad Courville

Bart Yakupzack

NOT Present:

Ronny Graham

Secretary Barham was present.

Wendy Brogdon called roll.

Chairman Manuel called for a motion for approval of the **July 2, 2015** and **July 23, 2015 Commission Minutes**. A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Broussard and seconded by Commissioner Swindell. Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.



For the agenda item, **Commission Special Announcements/Personal Privilege**,

Chairman Manuel advised that he would like to hold the December or January Commission meeting in Lake Charles. Commissioner Courville stated he would like to have one in Alexandria.

There were no other comments or questions heard.



Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **to recognize the Tchefuncte River Foundation River Clean-Up**, to be presented by Randy Pausina

Randy Pausina stated, the purposes for which the TRF is organized include promoting interest and providing leadership in the restoration and maintenance of the quality of the waters of the Tchefuncte River Basin, promoting improvements in the administration of public services relating to the Basin, and promoting the wise conservation of the resources of the Basin so that future generations might also enjoy it's benefits

TRF raised over two hundred thousand dollars and removed ninety-one tons which included ninety two items – including abandoned boats, camps, equipment and garbage. TRF met with local and federal officials to meet all required permits and regulations.

Commissioner Yakupzack thanked the group for their leadership and suggested that they present their model to other leadership authorities in the state to allow other areas to do the same.

There were no further comments or questions heard.



Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **To Hear Enforcement Reports for July**, to be presented by Lt Col. Martin.

There were 555 total cases for the month of July with 552 Written Warnings issued and 45 Public Assistance.

There were Thirteen (13) boating accidents reported, Five (5) injuries and Zero (0) Fatalities (both related to canoe/pirogue incidents where both individuals were not wearing a PFD).

Three (3) News releases were discussed:

Nine Men Cited for Illegally Harvesting Shrimp

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division agents working Terrebonne Parish cited nine men for alleged closed season shrimping last week.

While on patrol around 2:30 a.m. on July 31 agents found three shrimp boats using skimmer nets during the closed season.

Agents cited Jeremy Bourg Jr., 19, of Chauvin, and John N. Bourg, 48, of Houma, for using skimmer nets during a closed season and seized 1,782 pounds of shrimp. Adrian J. Lovell, 30, of Houma, and Rich J. Verrett, 49, of Houma, were cited for using skimmer nets during a closed season and 200 pounds of shrimp. Agents also cited Shawn M. Parfait, 40, of Houma, and Kent J. Guidroz, Jr., 33, of Dulac, for using skimmer nets during a closed season and seized 36 pounds of shrimp.

On Aug. 1 at 1:30 a.m. agents cited Roy C. Marris Jr., 57, of Westwego, Glenn A. Barrett, 22, of Gretna, and David J. Jeblonski, 25, of Marrero, for using skimmer nets during a closed season and seized 614 pounds of shrimp. Marris was also cited for failing to have running lights.

Using skimmers during a closed shrimp season brings a \$400 to \$950 fine and up to 120 days in jail. Failing to have running lights brings up to a \$50 fine and up to 15 days in jail.

Agents participating in the cases are Lt. Joseph Arnaud, Sgt. Thomas DeWitt, Sgt. Todd Laviolette, Senior Agent Norman Deroche, Senior Agent Stephen Rhodes, Senior Agent Lucas Hidalgo and Senior Agent Ryan Breaux.

Using skimmers during a closed shrimp season brings a \$400 to \$950 fine and up to 120 days in jail. In addition to any and all other penalties, for the first conviction of shrimping during the closed season, the court may revoke or suspend the violator's trawl, skimmer, and butterfly gear licenses for one year from the date of the conviction. During such revocation or suspension, the violator may be present on a vessel harvesting or possessing shrimp or possessing a trawl, skimmer, or butterfly net, only if the vessel is equipped with and employs an operating vessel monitoring system which is accessible to LDWF. The court shall also sentence the violator to perform 40 hours of community service.

Four Men Found Harvesting Oysters in Closed Area

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division agents arrested four men for alleged oyster harvesting violations on July 19 in Terrebonne Parish.

Agents arrested Samuel Dobson, 35, of Houma, Spencer Callahan, 22, of Houma, Luciano Desendez, 42, San Leon, Texas, and Dean Porche, 37, of Houma, for taking oysters during a closed season on the Sister Lake Public Oyster Seed Reservation. The captain of the vessel, Dobson, was also cited for violating log book and running light requirements.

On the evening of July 19, LDWF agents were on patrol when they observed a vessel in the Sister Lake Seed Reservation actively dredging for oysters.

Agents stopped the vessel and found the four men in possession of two sacks of oysters. Agents seized the vessel, oyster dredges and returned the oysters to the water. The men were booked into the Terrebonne Parish Jail.

With this latest violation Dobson violated the terms of his probation, which prohibited him from being on an oyster harvesting vessel for 10 years. Agents cited him on Dec. 18, 2014, for harvesting oysters from Sister Lake. He pleaded guilty on May 19, 2015.

The Sister Lake Public Oyster Seed Reservation is closed for the 2014/15 season.

Two Louisiana Men Sentenced for Illegal Hunting Activity

Two Louisiana men were sentenced in the Avoyelles 12th Judicial District Court on June 18 for illegal hunting activity. Judge William Bennett sentenced Barry R. Laiche II, 19, of Marksville, and Travis P. Maddox, 28, of Alexandria, for their involvement in the illegal hunting activity.

For illegally killing a black bear, Laiche was sentenced to 120 days in the Avoyelles Parish Jail with credit for time served and suspended. He was also placed on two years of probation, which prohibits him from being on any state wildlife management area. He also has to pay \$5,000 in restitution to the state for the replacement value of the bear, a \$100 fine, \$100 for cost of prosecution, \$100 to the Indigent Defender Board and \$250 court costs.

For illegally taking deer, Maddox was sentenced to 120 days in the Avoyelles Parish Jail, which was suspended. He was also placed on two years of probation, which consists of a \$50 per month fee. He also has to pay \$2,000 in restitution to the state for the replacement value of the deer, a \$500 fine and \$250 in court costs.

Assistant District Attorney Jonathan Gaspard prosecuted the case.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division agents arrested Laiche and Maddox in October 2013 for several deer violations that had taken place on the Grand Lake Rod and Gun Club in Avoyelles Parish. The incident consisted of five deer that were illegally taken.

In October 2013, a bear was discovered killed within the vicinity of the Grand Lake Rod and Gun Club. After an extensive investigation, Laiche and Maddox were arrested for taking the bear during the closed season in early 2014. Laiche was also sentenced for failing to comply with deer harvest record requirements, hunting deer using illegal methods, taking deer on D Management Assistance Program lands without permission, taking illegal deer during the open season and possession of illegally taken deer. For these charges he received a total of 330 days in the Avoyelles Parish Jail which was suspended. He was also ordered to pay \$500 in restitution to the state for the replacement value of the deer, a \$500 fine, \$250 to the Indigent Defender Board, \$250 for cost of prosecution and \$50 per month while on probation.

Commissioner Manuel noted that most of these arrests were made during the night and agents should be commended for their work.

There were no further comments or questions heard.



Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **to consider a Notice of Intent for Regulations on Saline Lake Game and Fish Preserve and Northwest Louisiana Game and Fish Preserve**, to be presented by Steve Smith as more fully described in the following PowerPoint presentation.

History of Game and Fish Preserves

- NWLA GFP Created in Act 191 in 1926
- Divided and created NWLA and Saline Lake GFPs in Act 120 in 1946.
- Act 105 of 1976 placed GFPs under control of LWF Commission and removed Saline Lake from NWLA GFP and placed it under authority of Saline Lake GFP Commission

Statutory Authority

- LA R.S. 721- Any parish or parishes by formal resolution of the governing authority, may appoint a game and fish commission, which may exercise those powers, duties, and functions provided in LA R. S. 721.
- LA R.S. 722- The commission may make rules and regulations for the government, regulation, and control of the preserve for the conservation, protection, and propagation of game and fish in the preserve, provided that such rules and regulations shall be finally approved, adopted, and promulgated by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Northwest Louisiana Game and Fish Preserve (LAC 76:III.Chapter 3.339)

Proposed Waterfowl Hunting Regulations Summary

- Permanent blinds prohibited EXCEPT for permitted blinds
- No waterfowl hunting within 350 yards of any permitted blind.
- Decoys must be removed daily EXCEPT
 - Permitted blinds may leave decoys entire season
 - Permitted blinds may place decoys no earlier than 30 days prior to waterfowl season.
 - Permitted blinds must remove decoys no later than 60 days after the end of waterfowl season.
 - \$25 fee for non-compliance, non-issuance of permit in subsequent years until fee paid.
- Permitting of blinds.
 - Individuals must be at least 18 years old and properly licensed to hunt waterfowl to apply for permit
 - Must be properly permitted and constructed no later than 30 days prior to waterfowl season
 - Issued permit must be attached to blind in a visible location
 - If any blind is not permitted within 30 days of waterfowl season, then blind becomes available for permitting on first come first serve basis
 - No permitted blind may be constructed within 350 yards of another permitted blind
 - If a blind is deemed to be not hunted in a given season, then that blind location becomes available for permitting the following year on a first come, first serve basis
 - Any non-permitted, constructed or moored blind shall be removed by NWLA GFP Commission

The rules in place have never been officially adopted by the Commission

Commissioner Courville suggested that the 25.00 fine to pick up decoys should be increased and there should be a charge for the permit as well as a fine for providing false information

Commissioner Broussard asked who makes the determination of blind issuance or is it a first come first serve? He also asked if the NOI was reviewed by LDWF Counsel

Mr. Smith did not know how the blinds were issued and stated that the attorneys did review the NOI

Saline Lake Game and Fish Preserve (LAC 76:III.Chapter 3.341)

Proposed Waterfowl Hunting Regulations Summary

- Permanent blinds prohibited EXCEPT for permitted blinds
- No waterfowl hunting within 350 yards of any permitted blind, or within 350 yard of any shoreline camp or home (the underline represents are the difference between the Saline Lake GFP and the Northwest GFP)
- Decoys must be removed daily EXCEPT
 - Permitted blinds may leave decoys entire season
 - Permitted blinds may place decoys no earlier than 30 days prior to waterfowl season
 - Permitted blinds must remove decoys no later than 60 days after the end of waterfowl season
 - \$25 fee for non-compliance, non-issuance of permit in subsequent years until fee paid
- Permitting of blinds
 - Individuals must be at least 18 years old and properly licensed to hunt waterfowl to apply for permit
 - Permits available for purchase Aug.1-Oct. 31 each year
 - Permits not paid for in this time period available on first come first serve basis
 - False info provided on permit applications will result in revocation or permit, changes to permit info must be provided to GFP Commission
 - Must be properly permitted and constructed no later than 30 days prior to waterfowl season.
 - Issued permit must be attached to blind in a visible location
 - If any blind is not permitted within 30 days of waterfowl season, then blind becomes available for permitting on first come first serve basis
 - No permitted blind may be constructed within 350 yards of another permitted blind
 - If a blind is deemed to be not hunted in a given season, then that blind location becomes available for permitting the following year on a first come, first serve basis
 - Any non-permitted, constructed or moored blind shall be removed by GFP Commission
 - Limit of one permitted blind per individual

(the underline represents are the difference between the Saline Lake GFP and the Northwest GFP)

Commissioner Broussard asked if WLF Agents enforce the rules if the NOI is passed, Steve Smith stated – Yes
Commissioner Courville stated the GFP Commission should be empowered to enforce themselves – He then asked the cost of purchasing a blind

Mr. Barton who serves on the GFP Commission answered - \$25.00 per year. He stated the money is used to pay the light bill at four landings and to repair parking lots at the landings.

He stated that there are currently 105 permitted permanent blinds

Commissioner Broussard asked if there is enough money generated to enforce regulations – However if the NOI passes, this will fall under WLF Enforcement; He also stated that the WLF Commission does not set monetary amounts for permits

Commissioner Courville suggested that the GFP Commission should be given authority to enforce themselves or empower them as much as possible

Mr. Barton stated there has only been one occasion in the past year with an abandoned blind and that the GFP Commission has no enforcement authority. He stated the GFP Commission tries to let common sense prevail and would like to have the rules that if you permit a blind, you have to actually use the blind

Commissioner Swindell asked if more than one (1) blind per person is allowed; Mr. Barton said “No”

Steve Smith stated that he approached the GFP Commissioners to include them in Title 76

Commissioner Broussard said giving the GFP Commission regulation authority “is do-able”

Steve Smith said, a Deputy Sheriff can be appointed by the parish to regulate

Commissioner Yakupzack stated that “this is statutory” - By approving these rules, the WLF Commission is not putting the burden on WLF Enforcement, it is allowing the parish to appropriate money to the Commission

Commissioner Davis asked if there is an active waiting list; Mr. Barton stated there is not a waiting list and there are not too many places available to place a new blind

Commissioner Yakupzack asked if the GFP Commission has the authority to employ a Deputy Sheriff to regulate; Steve Smith stated "Yes" - Yakupzack suggested consideration be given to standardize for all other Preserves
Commissioner Davis asked the total acreage; Mr. Barton stated over 8,000
Commissioner Courville asked – Outside of Wildlife Regulations will you employ a local Sheriff for enforcement?
Mr. Barton stated – yes, that is his understanding
Steve Smith stated that public comments will be accepted through November 05, 2015
Commissioner Courville asked if "word-smithing" would be allowed, if approved
Commissioner Broussard stated that it can be amended
Commissioner Manuel asked – Why is there not one set of rules for all the GFP's
Kenny Ribbeck, Administrator for Wildlife Division stated the Division has been reviewing all legal terms and terminology for all of the GFP's. The GFP's that have an active Commission are reviewed and brought before the WLF Commission first – He stated the local Commissions write the terms and terminology of each individual GFP. Mr. Ribbeck stated that those are brought before WLF Commission for Public Comment and Commission approval.

Commissioner Davis asked – How many Fish and Game Preserves are located in the state, Steve Smith replied 21

Commissioner Broussard made a motion to amend the proposal and make an addition to the Northwest GFP to include:

- No waterfowl hunting within 350 yards of any permitted blind, or within 350 yard of any shoreline camp or home
- Permits available for purchase Aug.1-Oct. 31 each year
- False info provided on permit applications will result in revocation or permit, changes to permit info must be provided to GFP Commission.
- Limit of one permitted blind per individual

A motion to amend the agenda was made by Commissioner Broussard and seconded by Commissioner Courville. Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.

Commissioner Yakupzack stated it would be more productive to have a representative from each GFP Commission attend the WLF Commission meeting to answer questions

Barney Callahan – LA. Wildlife Federation and LA. Waterfowl Federation -

Mr. Callahan finds this very troubling as it looks like private hunting clubs are being created on public lands with a Deputy Sheriff enforcing the rules. He stated the person with a permit can allow any of his friends and family to use the blind. He stated he does not think this is right

There were no further comments or questions heard.

A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Broussard and seconded by Commissioner Courville. Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.

(The full text of the Notice of Intent is
made a part of the record)

NOTICE OF INTENT

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Pursuant to the authority of Louisiana Revised Statutes, Title 56, Sections 6 and 727, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby advertises its intent approve and promulgate regulations on the Northwest Louisiana Game and Fish Preserve, proposed by the Northwest Louisiana Game and Fish Preserve Commission, and the Saline Lake Game and Fish Preserve, proposed by the Saline Game and Fish Preserve Commission.

Title 76

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Part III. Game and Fish Preserves and Sanctuaries

Chapter 3. Particular Game and Fish Preserves, Wildlife Management Areas, Refuges and Conservation Areas

§339. Northwest Louisiana Game and Fish Preserve

A. Waterfowl Hunting Regulations for Northwest Louisiana Game and Fish Preserve.

1. Hunting within 350 yards of permitted blind locations prohibited except for the individual permitted for that location and the associated hunting party.
2. Decoys must be removed daily except that decoys may be left for the entire waterfowl season at permitted blind locations. Decoys cannot be placed at such permitted blind locations 30 days prior to waterfowl season, and all decoys must be removed from permitted blind locations no more than 60 days from the last day of waterfowl season. Failure to comply will result in a penalty of \$25.00, which must be paid prior to being issued any subsequent years' blind permit.
3. Individuals must be at least 18 years old and be properly licensed to hunt waterfowl in Louisiana to apply for a blind permit.
4. Construction of or mooring of permanent blinds prohibited except that construction of or mooring of permanent blinds is allowed by permit issued by the Northwest Louisiana Game and Fish Preserve Commission in accordance with the following.
 - a. All blinds must be properly permitted and constructed no later than thirty days prior to the opening day of waterfowl season.
 - b. Permits issued must be attached to the blind in a visible location no later than thirty days prior to the opening day of waterfowl season.
 - c. Any blind location not properly permitted no later than thirty days prior to the opening day of waterfowl season will become an open blind location available to be permitted by the first person to request such permit.
 - d. A blind is not considered to be properly permitted until the permit is obtained from the Northwest Louisiana Game and Fish Preserve Commission and attached in a visible location on the blind.
 - e. If a blind is not permitted in the above mentioned fashion, then that blind becomes an open blind and can be permitted by anyone within the thirty day period prior to the opening day of waterfowl season.
 - f. No blind shall be newly constructed or moored, or be allowed to exist within 350 yards of a previously permitted and existing blind. This shall not apply to a blind which was not permitted in the previous year. Consequently, a blind may be constructed within 350 yards of a blind which was not used and properly permitted during the previous waterfowl season.
 - g. No individual shall be allowed to permit a blind location and fail to hunt said location during the waterfowl season. Any permitted blind location that is not used during the waterfowl season shall become an open location available for anyone to permit the following waterfowl season.
 - h. No individual shall be allowed to permit more than one blind within confines of the Preserve.
 - i. Any non-permitted constructed or moored blind will be removed from the preserve by the Northwest Louisiana Game and Fish Preserve Commission.

§341. Saline Lake Game and Fish Preserve

A. Waterfowl Hunting Regulations for Saline Lake Game and Fish Preserve.

1. Hunting within 350 yards of any shoreline camp or home prohibited. Hunting within 350 yards of permitted blind locations prohibited, except for the individual permitted for that location and the associated hunting party.
2. Decoys must be removed daily except that decoys may be left for the entire waterfowl season at permitted blind locations. Decoys cannot be placed at such permitted blind locations 30 days prior to waterfowl season, and all decoys must be removed from permitted blind locations no more than 60 days from the last day of waterfowl season. Failure to comply will result in a penalty of \$25.00, which must be paid prior to being issued any subsequent years' blind permit.
3. Construction of or mooring of permanent blinds prohibited except that construction of or mooring of permanent blinds is allowed by permit issued by the Saline Lake Game and Fish Preserve Commission in accordance with the following.
 - a. Individuals must be at least 18 years old and be properly licensed to hunt waterfowl in Louisiana to apply for a blind permit.
 - b. Blind permits will be available for purchase from August 1 through October 31 of the current year waterfowl season. Any permits not paid for in this time frame will become available on a first come, first serve basis.
 - c. Any false information given in conjunction with the acquisition of a blind permit will result in the permit being voided.
 - d. Any changes to existing permits must be submitted in writing to the Saline Lake Game and Fish Preserve Commission.
 - e. GPS coordinates must accompany any request for a new blind permit. These coordinates will be verified prior to approval by the Commission. These coordinates must represent the exact blind location.
 - f. All blinds must be properly permitted and constructed no later than thirty days prior to the opening day of waterfowl season.
 - g. A current or previous years' permit, or photocopy of such, must be attached to the blind in a visible location no later than thirty days prior to the opening day of waterfowl season.
 - h. Any blind location not properly permitted no later than thirty days prior to the opening day of waterfowl season will become an open blind location available to be permitted on a first come, first serve basis.
 - i. A blind is not considered to be properly permitted until the permit is obtained from the Saline Lake Game and Fish Preserve Commission and attached in a visible location on the blind.
 - j. Blind locations will be considered abandoned and declared open by the Saline Lake Game and Fish Preserve Commission, regardless of permit status, if for one complete hunting season no usable blind structure or identification of a usable floating/boat blind is evident.
 - k. No blind shall be newly constructed or moored, or be allowed to exist within 350 yards of a previously permitted and existing blind. This shall not apply to a blind which was not permitted in the previous year. Consequently, a blind may be constructed within 350 yards of a blind which was not used and properly permitted during the previous waterfowl season.
 - l. No individual shall be allowed to permit more than one blind within confines of the Preserve.
 - m. Any non-permitted constructed or moored blind will be removed from the preserve by the Saline Lake Game and Fish Preserve Commission.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 56:6 and R.S. 56:727.

The Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is authorized to take any and all necessary steps on behalf of the Commission to promulgate and effectuate this notice of intent and final rule, including but not limited to, the filing of the fiscal and economic impact statement, the filing of the notice of intent and final rule, and the preparation of reports and correspondence to other agencies of government.

Interested persons may submit written comments relative to the proposed rule to Steve Smith, Wildlife Management Area Program Manager, P. O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70898-9000, prior to November 5, 2015.

Family Impact Statement

In accordance with Act #1183 of 1999 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby issues its Family Impact Statement in connection with the preceding Notice of Intent. This Notice of Intent will have no impact on the six criteria set out at R.S. 49:972(B).

Poverty Impact Statement

The proposed rulemaking will have no impact on poverty as described in R.S. 49:973.

Provider Impact Statement

This Rule has no known impact on providers as described in HCR 170 of 2014.

Edwin "Pat" Manuel
Chairman

Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **to hear a Presentation on Preliminary Results from the 2015-16 Survey of Louisiana Waterfowl Hunters**, to be presented by Larry Reynolds, as more fully described in the following PowerPoint presentation:

Mr. Reynolds stated this is the third major survey. This survey will be done every five years.

The survey ended June 30th – The surveys have been sent out but not complete

Survey Objectives

- Assess satisfaction with new waterfowl zones
- Obtain preferences for goose season options
- Estimate hunter satisfaction relative to past surveys
- Evaluate new research survey methods
- Increase opportunity for public engagement and feedback

Mr. Reynolds stated there is a need to liberalize goose options this year; to be as cost effective as possible; and to find a way to receive more public feedback

Survey Methods – 4 Survey Formats

Random Mail Survey Announcement

Postcard and paper survey mailed twice each to a random sample of 2,500 HIP register hunters

E-Mail Survey

Announcement e-mail containing a link to the survey and three reminder emails sent to 24,842 HIP registered hunters for which we had e-mail addresses after removal of random samples

Mixed Mode Survey

Postcard invitation to take survey online mailed three times followed by one mailing of a survey, to a random sample of 2,500 HIP registered hunters

Open Web Survey

A web hosted survey on the WLF website and publicized via press releases, media announcements and email announcements for anyone to respond

2015 Survey of Louisiana Waterfowl Hunters

SURVEY	SAMPLE SIZE	VALID RESPONSES	RESPONSE RATE
Random Mail Survey	2,500	603	24.1 %
E-Mail Survey	24,482	4,873	19.6%
Mixed Mode Survey	2,500	426	17.0%
Sub-Total	29,842	5,902	19.8%
Open Web Survey	NA	1,480	NA

Mr. Reynolds stated that the Open Web survey is a very biased survey

Commissioner Courville asked if Random Mail outs are required and Mr. Reynolds stated yes, they are required in order to have your survey published for Academia purposes. He stated Dr. Laborde with LSU is working on trying to get this requirement changed

Comparison of demographics, avidity and Success

Category	Random Mail	Email	Mixed Mode	Open Web	Consolidated
Average % Female Participants	5.2%	2.5%	5.5%	1.8%	2.8%
Average Age	45.2%	44.6%	46.9%	38.9%	43.7%
Avg. # Days Hunted (Season)	15.5%	13.5%	15.0%	26.7%	16.6%
Avg. Harvest Ducks (Season)	41.0%	40.8%	44.7%	83.4%	50.2%
Avg. Harvest Geese (Season)	5.7%	4.1%	3.0%	14.6%	6.4%
Avg. Harvest per day (Ducks & Geese)	3.0%	3.3%	3.1%	3.7%	3.4%

Percent of respondents by zone most frequently hunted(%)

6

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Random Mail</u>	<u>E-Mail</u>	<u>Mixed Mode</u>	<u>Open Web</u>	<u>Consolidated</u>
Coastal	58%	57%	64%	56%	57%
East	32%	30%	27%	36%	31%
West	8%	8%	5%	6%	7%
Did not hunt last season	3%	6%	4%	<1%	4%
Hunted 1 Zone	82%	83%	83%	70%	80%
Hunted 2 Zones	16%	12%	13%	24%	15%
Hunted 3 Zones	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%
Hunted on WMA	51%	23%	43%	36%	28%
Sample Size	542	4,833	405	1,469	7,249

Mr. Reynolds stated that Hunter populations generally hunts in only one zone as seen in this graphic

Goose hunters by survey method

<u>Goose Hunters</u>	<u>Random Mail</u>	<u>E-Mail</u>	<u>Mixed Mode</u>	<u>Open Web</u>	<u>Consolidated</u>
Did not hunt geese	84%	83%	88%	68%	80%
Hunted 1-5 days	11%	13%	10%	18%	14%
Hunted >5 days	5%	4%	2%	14%	6%
Sample Size	597	4,541	423	1,480	7,041

7

Mr. Reynolds stated decisions would be made this year on geese

Commissioner Swindell asked if it is assumed that everyone is truthful on surveys, Mr. Reynolds stated yes, he assumes that they are all truthful

8

Trends in Louisiana waterfowl hunter satisfaction

Category	2005 Random Mail*	2010 Random Mail*	2012 Random Mail	2013 Random Mail	2015 Random Mail
Very Satisfied	2%	10%	17%	11%	19%
Satisfied	7%	16%	49%	41%	38%
Average/ Neither	12%	29%	15%	18%	21%
Dissatisfied	28%	29%	12%	19%	14%
Very Dissatisfied	52%	16%	7%	11%	8%

* Scales re-stated for comparability (questions similar, not identical)

**Please rate your overall satisfaction with
the 2014-2015 Louisiana waterfowl season:**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Coastal</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>Consoli- dated</u>
Very Satisfied	24%	11%	11%	18%
Satisfied	43%	39%	37%	41%
Average/Neither	15%	19%	20%	17%
Dissatisfied	14%	21%	24%	17%
Very Dissatisfied	5%	10%	8%	7%
Sample Size	3,957	2,160	489	6,662



Mr. Reynolds stated that Zones were changed in 2012 from two zones to three zones

**Please rate your satisfaction with the new
Louisiana waterfowl hunting zones:
Statewide results by Zone Hunted most frequently**

<u>Geographic Boundaries</u>	<u>Coastal</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>Consolidated</u>
Very satisfied	18%	13%	10%	16%
Satisfied	50%	49%	45%	49%
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	23%	29%	30%	26%
Dissatisfied	4%	5%	8%	5%
Very dissatisfied	5%	4%	4%	5%
Sample Size	3,436	1,935	419	6,008

Please rate your satisfaction with the new Louisiana waterfowl hunting zones: Statewide results by Zone Hunted most frequently

<u>Dates of Season Opening</u>	<u>Coastal</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>Consolidated</u>
Very satisfied	14%	9%	6%	12%
Satisfied	39%	41%	32%	39%
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	17%	20%	21%	19%
Dissatisfied	18%	20%	23%	19%
Very dissatisfied	12%	10%	17%	11%
Sample Size	3,525	1,994	430	6,173

Please rate your satisfaction with the new Louisiana waterfowl hunting zones: Statewide results by Zone hunted most frequently

<u>Dates of Season Closing</u>	<u>Coastal</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>Consolidated</u>
Very satisfied	12%	8%	5%	10%
Satisfied	34%	34%	29%	34%
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	18%	17%	20%	18%
Dissatisfied	22%	26%	27%	23%
Very dissatisfied	14%	14%	19%	14%
Sample Size	3,516	1,998	429	6,168

Mr. Reynolds stated that the "Dissatisfied" and "Very Dissatisfied" percentages are down



**A. East-West-Coastal Zones
(current format)**



**B. East-West-Coastal Zones
(expanded East Zone)**



C. 2 Zones: North-Coastal Zones



Separate Goose Zones

Mr. Reynolds stated that no one was overly impressed with his ideas of changing the zones

Please identify which of the following zone system you would prefer:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Coastal Zone</u>	<u>East Zone</u>	<u>West Zone</u>	<u>Consolidated</u>
A. East-West-Coastal Zones (current format)	34%	31%	27%	32%
B. East-West-Coastal Zones (expanded East Zone)	7%	10%	8%	8%
C. 2 Zones: North-Coastal Zones	23%	30%	39%	26%
No Preference	36%	29%	26%	34%
Sample Size	3,959	2,163	492	7,020

Mr. Reynolds stated that this graphic is basically “a wash”. The place with the least support which will be affected the most is the coastal zone

Would you prefer a separate 2-zone system for goose hunting, possibly having season dates and splits different from duck zones?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Coastal Zone</u>	<u>East Zone</u>	<u>West Zone</u>	<u>Consolidated</u>
Yes	28%	23%	26%	26%
No	17%	14%	15%	16%
No Preference	56%	63%	59%	59%
Sample Size	3,969	2,170	494	7,045

Would you prefer a separate 2-zone system for goose hunting, possibly having season dates and splits different from duck zones?

<u>Goose Hunters</u>	<u>1-5 Days</u>	<u>>5 Days</u>
Yes	37%	41%
No	21%	32%
No Preference	42%	27%
Sample Size	943	408

Mr. Reynolds stated that the hunting regulations would not be complicated by this.
Separate Zones can be set for Goose Hunting

Which combination would you prefer for season length and daily bag limit for White-fronted geese?

18

<u>Category</u>	<u>Random Mail</u>	<u>E-Mail</u>	<u>Mixed Mode</u>	<u>Open Web</u>	<u>Consolidated</u>
74 days and 2 birds per day (current)	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%
88 days and 2 birds per day	16%	16%	16%	20%	17%
74 days and 3 birds per day	42%	45%	43%	50%	45%
No Preference	40%	36%	38%	27%	35%
Sample size	600	4532	424	1,368	6,924

Which combination would you prefer for season length and daily bag limit for White-fronted geese?

<u>Category</u>	<u>Coastal Zone</u>	<u>East Zone</u>	<u>West Zone</u>	<u>Consolidated</u>
74 days and 2 birds per day (current)	3%	2%	2%	3%
88 days and 2 birds per day	18%	16%	16%	17%
74 days and 3 birds per day	47%	44%	44%	45%
No Preference	32%	38%	38%	35%
Sample Size	3,901	2,130	489	6,924

Which combination would you prefer for season length and daily bag limit for White-fronted geese?

<u>Goose Hunters</u>	<u>1-5 Days</u>	<u>>5 Days</u>
74 days and 2 birds per day (current)	3%	5%
88 days and 2 birds per day	23%	32%
74 days and 3 birds per day	64%	58%
No Preference	10%	5%
Sample Size	925	404

Mr. Reynolds stated there are three (3) biologically equivalent options – they generate the same harvest rates

3 Options at the Flyway level

107 days Speckled Belly Goose Hunting with One (1) bird limit

88 days with a Two (2) bird limit

74 days with a Three (3) bird limit

Mr. Reynolds stated he does not recommend the 107/1 day option

Population and Flyway level says we can expand our opportunity but should just leave it where it is

85 percent of Louisiana hunters do not hunt for geese in Louisiana

Zone Boundary & Goose Season Summary

Mostly satisfied with current zone boundaries

Less satisfied with season dates

Little interest in adjusting Coastal Zone boundary

Toss up between current configuration, north/south zones and no preference

No clear interest in goose specific zones, more among goose hunters

Clear consistent preference for 74 day season with 3 bird bag for white fronted geese

Survey Method Conclusions

Response rates continue to decline but more participants than ever before

Results from email and random mail out surveys are very similar

May provide cost effective alternative to mail out surveys without incurring the bias of open web surveys for activity estimates

Commissioner Yakupzack asked how many waterfowl hunters are there in the state,

Mr. Reynolds answered: One Hundred Thousand - Seven (7%) percent of licensed hunters

Commissioner Courville asked if there is a calculated error rate,

Mr. Reynolds answered: +/- .02%

Commissioner Swindell asked if the random mail respondents are included in the email respondents,

Mr. Reynolds answered: No, duplicates are removed from the data set

Dr. Luke Laborde stated that open web respondents that respond in any other method are removed

Commissioner Davis commended Larry Reynolds and his staff along with the Department for their work being some of the best data in the country

There were no further comments or questions heard



Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **to consider a Declaration of Emergency to set the 2015-16 Regular Season Waterfowl Hunting Regulations**, to be presented by Larry Reynolds, as more fully described in the following PowerPoint presentation

Mr. Reynolds showed a short video of the US Fish & Wildlife Status Report

Mr Reynolds stated the following:

Mid Continent Mallard Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) Criteria

Mallard populations on traditional survey area plus Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota

11.8 Million

Pond number in Prairie Canada

4.15 Million

Commissioner Swindell asked if the survey was still done by aerial methods – Mr. Reynolds stated that yes, it has been conducted the same way using the same methods for years, since 1955

Species Changes

Increase in canvasback population resulted in a bag limit of only 2 per day

No other changes for ducks

Increases in white fronted goose population and revised harvest management plan allow for longer season or increased bag limit

Daily Bag Limits

6 ducks per day which may include no more than:

4 mallards of which no more than 2 can be hens

3 scaup

3 wood ducks

2 redheads, pintails, canvasbacks

1 mottled duck, black duck

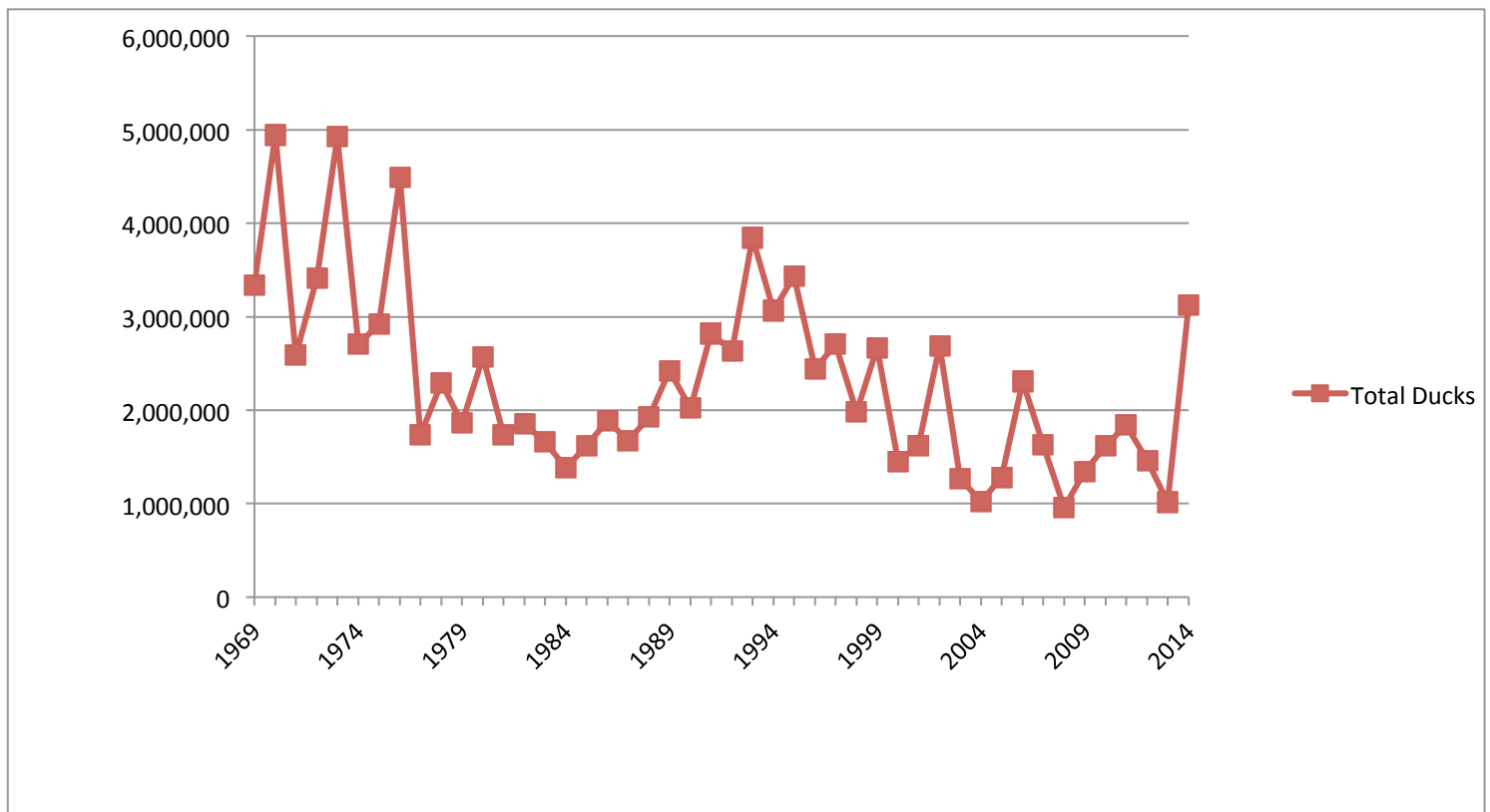
Considerations

Maximize the number of weekends

Must be open Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's holidays

Maximum allowable unless biological or hunter opinion data justifying otherwise

November Aerial Survey



Biological Data: Aerial Survey of the coastal zone in Catahoula from 1969 through 2014

The trend in the total number of ducks is down with the exception of last year (very cold storm in the beginning of November). 11 of the 15 lowest November surveys on record have been flown since 2000. The other 4 were flown in the mid to late 1980's when the breeding populations were at record lows. This decline is happening when the breeding population is very high. There is some evidence that fewer ducks are coming to Louisiana by the first week in November.

Mr. Reynolds stated that the exact cause of this is unknown.

Commissioner Courville asked if he has Harvest Trends over that same period and Mr. Reynolds stated that he would be sharing that information shortly.

Harvest Data
Chronology of Harvest: 2000-2009 Seasons

<u>Week</u>	<u>Zone</u>		
	<u>Southwest</u>	<u>Southeast</u>	<u>Northwest</u>
1	21.2	20.1	17.8
2	15.1	12.9	18.6
3	14.4 (50.7)	17.6 (50.6)	18.9 (55.3)
4			
5			
6	12.7	14.1	15.2
7	9.6	10.6	8.1
8	8.9	7.6	7.8
9	7.4	6.5	6.7
10	10.7 (49.3)	10.6 (49.4)	7.5 (44.7)

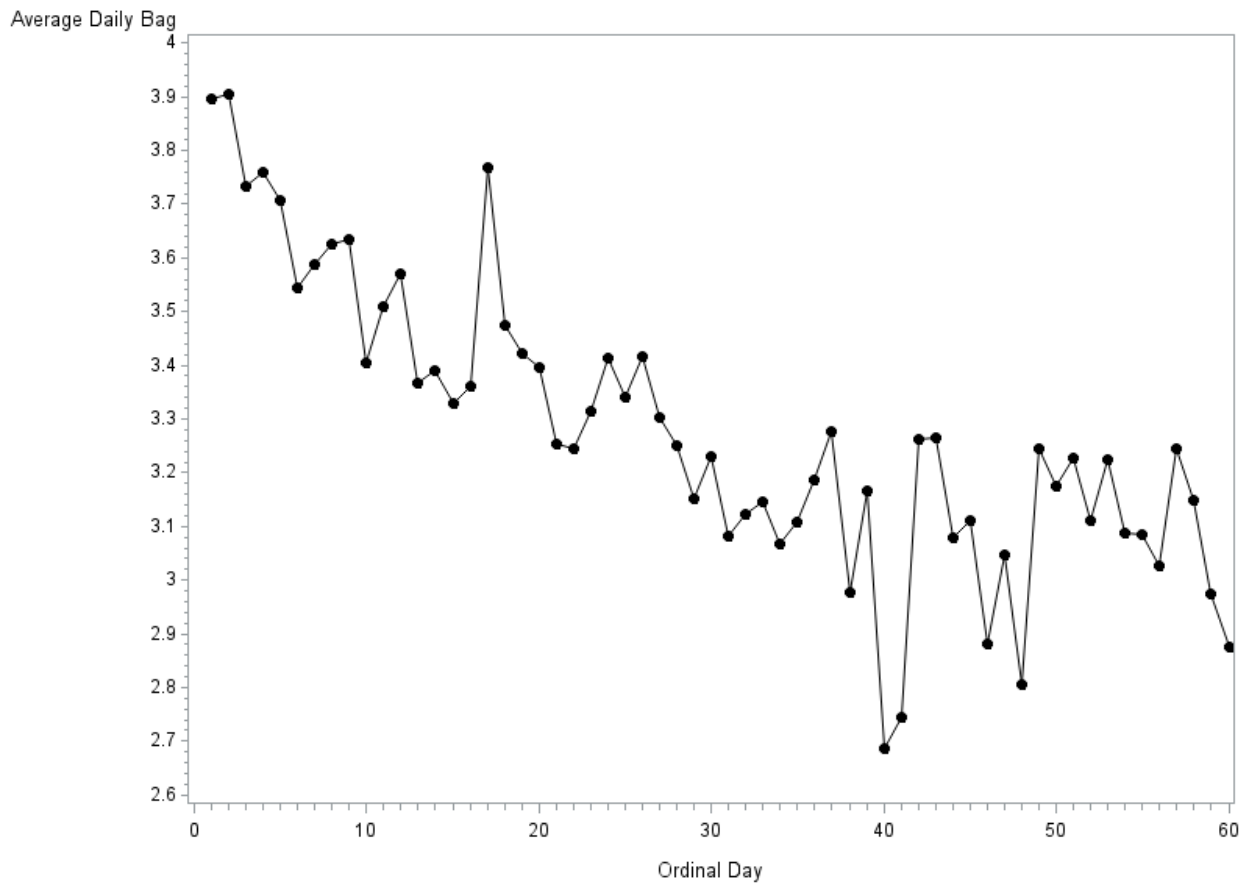
Mr. Reynolds stated that the weeks in this table are quantified from the earliest date that the West zone has opened since 2000 and is 7-day periods after that. Because of calendar shifts, some years have open days during the time of the split for most of the 10 seasons. That is why there is some kill during the typical split period.

But you can clearly see there is very little difference in the timing of harvest for SW and SE Louisiana Parishes, where 45-45% of their harvest comes in the first 3 weeks of the season.

Furthermore, if anything, the harvest in NW LA Parishes comes a little bit later, not earlier as the hunters that contacted us suggested, but probably is not different enough to justify a separate zone.

Commissioner Courville asked if we would see harvest data in the future for each of the zones as it becomes available. Mr. Reynolds responded absolutely will and that it takes 10 years as hunters are not selected by Parish – they are selected by state and once you can put ten years together, you can put reliable parish data together. He also mentioned that the coastal zone has only been in the group for three years.

Average Daily Bag observed in Louisiana HIP sample from 2004-2013



Mr. Reynolds stated, based on the chart – the Average daily bag declines as the season goes on and per hunter success is less late in the season

Hunter-Opinion Survey Data

Preferred Hunting Dates (Hunters)	<u>East</u> <u>Private</u>	<u>East</u> <u>Public</u>	<u>West</u> <u>Private</u>	<u>West</u> <u>Public</u>	<u>Coastal</u> <u>Private</u>	<u>Coastal</u> <u>Public</u>
Oct. Week 1	5%	3%	5%	6%	9%	5%
Oct. Week 2	4%	3%	10%	1%	4%	3%
Oct. Week 3	3%	4%	21%	6%	5%	4%
Oct. Week 4	10%	7%	21%	7%	9%	8%
Nov. Week 1	19%	14%	33%	23%	22%	20%
Nov. Week 2	28%	26%	38%	35%	45%	39%
Nov. Week 3	55%	55%	62%	47%	65%	59%
Nov. Week 4	55%	63%	59%	58%	70%	63%
Dec. Week 1	66%	62%	62%	59%	60%	59%
Dec. Week 2	67%	66%	64%	61%	63%	58%
Dec. Week 3	79%	77%	69%	72%	76%	70%
Dec. Week 4	82%	81%	72%	75%	78%	73%
Jan. Week 1	85%	79%	74%	72%	78%	73%
Jan. Week 2	83%	70%	69%	65%	71%	68%
Jan. Week 3	68%	61%	54%	52%	57%	60%
Jan. Week 4	60%	51%	54%	43%	39%	47%
# of Hunters	149	532	39	88	195	700

Mr. Reynolds spoke on the above Hunter Opinion Survey Data conducted in 2012

Hunters were asked to give the 8 weeks they wanted to hunt between October, November, December and January. The above chart represents the responses by week and zone

Preference for Coastal Zone season dates – hunters who hunt the Coastal Zone

<u>Coastal Zone Hunters</u>	<u>Random Mail</u>	<u>Internet Panel</u>	<u>Open Web</u>
Nov. 9 – Dec. 1 & Dec. 14 – Jan. 19 (traditional dates)	19%	15%	19%
Nov. 2 – Dec. 1 & Dec. 14 – Jan. 12 (more November hunting)	9%	12%	18%
Nov. 16 – Dec. 8 & Dec. 14 – Jan. 19 (more December hunting)	9%	16%	13%
Nov. 16 – Dec. 8 & Dec. 21 – Jan. 26 (more January hunting)	54%	44%	43%
No preference	9%	13%	6%
Sample size	289	75	792

Mr. Reynolds spoke on the above Hunter Opinion Survey Data conducted in 2013 with specific weeks

The above chart represents the responses

The latest possible hunting dates are favored by the Coastal zone

Preference for East Zone season dates – hunters who hunt the East Zone

<u>East Zone Hunters</u>	<u>Random Mail</u>	<u>Internet Panel</u>	<u>Open Web</u>
Nov. 16 – Dec. 1 & Dec. 14 – Jan. 26 (traditional dates)	24%	13%	20%
Nov. 9 – Dec. 1 & Dec. 14 – Jan. 19 (more November hunting)	9%	11%	11%
Nov. 16 – Dec. 1 & Dec. 7 – Jan. 19 (more December hunting)	8%	10%	13%
Nov. 23 – Dec. 1 & Dec. 7 – Jan. 26 (more late season hunting)	52%	50%	49%
No preference	7%	16%	7%
Sample size	274	70	680

Mr. Reynolds spoke on the above Hunter Opinion Survey Data conducted in 2013 with specific weeks
The above chart represents the responses
The latest possible hunting dates are favored by the Eastern zone as is the coastal zone

Preference for West Zone season dates – hunters who hunt the West Zone

<u>West Zone Hunters</u>	<u>Random Mail</u>	<u>Internet Panel</u>	<u>Open Web</u>
Nov. 9 – Dec. 1 & Dec. 14 – Jan. 19 (traditional dates)	18%	13%	10%
Nov. 2 – Dec. 1 & Dec. 14 – Jan. 12 (more November hunting)	12%	9%	22%
Nov. 9 – Dec. 8 & Dec. 14 – Jan. 12 (more December hunting)	8%	13%	9%
Nov. 16 – Dec. 8 & Dec. 21 – Jan. 26 (more late season hunting)	51%	52%	50%
No preference	11%	13%	8%
Sample size	84	23	249

Mr. Reynolds spoke on the above Hunter Opinion Survey Data conducted in 2013 with specific weeks
The above chart represents the responses
The latest possible hunting dates are favored by the West zone as is the Coastal and Eastern Zones.
All three zones prefer the latest season dates

Snow Geese

	<u>Louisiana</u>	<u>Flyway</u>	<u>%</u>
1996-2000	834,000	1,615,000	52%
2001-2005	635,000	1,634,000	39%
2006-2010	569,000	1,819,000	31%
2011-2015	568,000	2,820,000	20%

Counts in Illinois, Missouri, and Tennessee are increasing.

Jan. 2015	287,000	2,235,000	13%
------------------	----------------	------------------	------------

Mr. Reynolds stated the above chart represents 20 years of data

Louisiana has gone from wintering geese from 50 percent down to 20 percent and the numbers have gone from 800 thousand to around 550 thousand. Losing numbers and proportion to Illinois, Missouri and Tennessee

White-fronted Geese

	<u>Louisiana</u>	<u>Flyway</u>	<u>%</u>
1996-2000	105,000	132,000	80%
2001-2005	70,000	127,000	55%
2006-2010	103,000	225,000	46%
2011-2015	98,000	309,000	32%

Counts in Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas,
Tennessee and Kentucky are increasing.

Jan. 2015 59,000 386,000 15%

Mr. Reynolds stated the above chart represents 20 years of data

Louisiana has gone from wintering geese from 80 percent down to 32 percent and the numbers have gone from 800 thousand to around 550 thousand. Losing numbers and proportion to Illinois, Missouri and Tennessee, Arkansas and Kentucky

Commissioner Courville asked if anything has changed in the 20 year count to specks.

Mr. Reynolds stated he did ask the other states and Arkansas is the only state that has changed, they do not count geese. He also stated that Michigan quit doing mid year surveys two years ago.

Yakupzack asked how does he arrive at the number for Louisiana – Mr. Reynolds stated the number comes from US Fish and Wildlife Service planes with the same pilot for the past 30 years (Mr. Freddie Roetker) surveys Units in Southwest Louisiana all the way to Southeast Louisiana and up to the Red River. LDWF pilots survey the northeast LA. units from the Red River north to the Arkansas border over to the edge of the piney woods.

Commissioner Yakupzack asked Mr. Reynolds if he is comfortable that Mr. Roetker did not do anything different this past year in his flights. Reynolds stated that he is certain nothing was done differently.

Mr. Reynolds said that this data is the weakest biological data that we have. It is flown in the winter where there is difficulty with aircraft and visibility. This is a snapshot. The mid-winter survey is done over a six day period over the entire flyway. 20 years of data is used in the event of an anomaly so that it will average out.

Looking at the data on single year is weak and speculative and you have to be prepared for criticism.

Commissioner Courville asked if it would be possible to put the data on the LDWF website as to help the hunters digest the data and know where it is coming from. Mr. Reynolds stated he could do that.

Season Preferences

STATEWIDE	Season preference	All hunters (%)	1-3 day goose	>3 days goose specific
	74/2	21.9	31.2	41.7
	88/2	16.9	23.2	32.4
	74/3	43.3	64.0	57.9
	No preference	34.8	9.3	5.0
	Sample Size	6,924	925	404
COASTAL ZONE	Season preference	All hunters (%)	1-3 day goose specific	>3 days goose specific
	74/2	3.3	4.3	5.7
	88/2	16.0	25.6	33.3
	74/3	46.9	61.4	57.1
	No preference	31.8	8.7	3.9
	Sample Size	3,901	606	333
EAST ZONE	Season preference	All hunters (%)	1-3 day goose specific	>3 days goose specific
	74/2	2.4	1.7	0
	88/2	16.1	16.6	31.6
	74/3	43.9	69.0	57.9
	No preference	37.6	10.3	10.3
	Sample Size	2,130	239	37
WEST ZONE	Season preference	All hunters (%)	1-3 day goose specific	>3 days goose specific
	74/2	3.3	0	0
	88/2	13.3	16.3	22.2
	74/3	43.6	64.3	66.7
	No preference	37.6	16.7	11.1
	Sample Size	439	34	9

Mr. Reynolds state the above chart represents hunters that specifically hunted geese, 20 or more days
51 percent favored 74 days, 3 per day

All biological data surveys given to geese hunters (128 hunters) received resulted in the option of 74 days, 3 per day

Mr. Reynolds stated this is actual responses from 128 geese hunters who hunt geese 20 or more days

Mr. Reynolds said "he is getting way down there in sample size, which is pretty good - as there is not 128 guys here". Reynolds said this is really good information received from 128 guys.

Commissioner Yakupzack said, "I think we will get to that; you said everywhere you look, but that's the last place we gotta look is in this room, so we will see what they have to say".



When setting season dates, Mr Reynolds stated that he does not take into consideration “What thy neighbor is doing” as over 80 percent of the hunters come from one zone.

He does not consider when people are taking their vacations

He does not consider Deer Hunting Season

He does not consider the Alabama football game

Proposed Season Dates

Ducks, Coots and Mergansers: 60-days

West Zone: Nov. 14 – Dec. 13 Dec. 19 – Jan. 17
(Youth hunts: Nov. 7 and Jan. 23)

East Zone: Nov. 21 – Dec. 6 Dec. 19 – Jan. 31
(Youth hunts: Nov. 14 and Feb. 6)

Coastal Zone: Nov. 14 – Dec. 6 Dec. 19 – Jan. 24
(Youth Weekend: Nov. 7-8)

Mr. Reynolds reviewed the proposed season dates as seen in the above graphic

Assuming the above graphic is the duck season dates, the next graphic represents the geese dates

Season Recommendations (P)

Light and White-Fronted Geese: 74-days

West Zone: Nov. 14 – Dec. 13 Dec. 19 – Jan. 31

East Zone: Nov. 7 – Dec. 6 Dec. 19 – Jan. 31

Coastal Zone: Nov. 14 – Dec. 6 Dec. 19 – Feb. 7

Bag and Possession Limits:

Light geese: 20 per day, no possession limit

White-fronted geese: 3 per day, possession limit 9 **

** When the Canada goose season is open, the limit on dark geese (white-fronted and Canada) will be 3 per day in aggregate.

Mr. Reynolds stated that 74 days / 3 per day and 88 days and 2 per day are biologically equivalent.

Mr. Reynolds stated he uses the hunter opinion data for the proposal dates

Season Recommendations (P)

Canada Geese:

West Zone: Nov. 14 – Dec. 13 and Dec. 19 - Jan. 31

East Zone: Nov. 7 – Dec. 6 and Dec. 19 – Jan. 31

Coastal Zone: Nov. 14 – Dec. 6 and Dec. 19 – Jan. 31

Bag limit: 3 Dark geese (Canada and white-fronted) in aggregate.

Possession limit: 9 Canada geese

Mr. Reynolds stated that January 31st is the last day to hunt for Canada Geese

Commissioner Courville asked, How late can you hunt for White-Fronts. Mr. Reynolds answered, the Sunday closest to February 15th. This year is February 14th.

Commissioner Manuel asked – If we go to February 14th, how many total days of Speckle belly hunting would that be. Mr. Reynolds answered, it would depend on when you pick to start.

Season Recommendation (P)

Conservation Order for Light Geese:

West Zone: Dec. 14 (Mon.) – Dec. 18 (Fri.)
Feb. 1 (Mon.) – March 6
East Zone: Dec. 7 (Mon.) – Dec. 18 (Fri.)
Feb. 1 (Mon.) – March 6
Coastal Zone: Dec. 7 (Mon.) – Dec. 18 (Fri.)
Feb 8 (Mon.) – March 6

No bag or possession limit, use of electronic calls
and unplugged shotguns allowed, shooting
hours extended to half-hour after sunset.

Mr. Reynolds stated the Conservation Order can be opened when other season are closed. In this case its during the split.

Season Recommendations

Rails and Gallinules: 54 days

Nov. 14 – Jan. 6 (Wed.)

Bag Limits:

King and Clapper: 15 per day in aggregate
45 in possession

Sora and Virginia: 25 per day in aggregate
75 in possession

Gallinules: 15 per day, 45 in possession

Season Recommendations (P)

Snipe: 107 days

West Zone: Nov. 9 (Mon.) – Dec. 13 Dec. 19 – Feb. 28

East Zone: Nov. 2 (Mon.) – Dec. 6 Dec. 19 – Feb. 28

Coastal: Nov. 2 (Mon.) – Dec. 6 Dec. 19 – Feb. 28

Bag limit is 8 per day, 16 in possession

**Ext. Falconry for Ducks, Rails, and Gallinules:
Nov. 2 – Jan. 31**

Note: 16 days of total season length for rails, gallinules, and extended falconry were used during the September teal season.

Mr. Reynolds said there is 82 Falconers in the state that hunt. One must be a permitted Falconer in the state in order to hunt falconry

Public Comments were heard as follows

Jeff Poe, Big Lake Guide Service

Season proposal should open a week earlier on the first Saturday based on Harvest Data report with equal number of days in both splits

Charles Williams, LA. Waterfowl Alliance

Needs more studies before you increase bag limits. The timing of this proposal is of concern based on January data

Doug Miller, Gros Savant Lodge and Sweet Lake Land & Oil Land Manager

Consider maximum days in November and December; More successful killing in November and December
Opposed to higher limits – Stay at 74 days

Beau Barbe, LWA Lake Charles, LA

Opposes raising geese to three since population shows the numbers are down. Likes 81 days 2 per day

John Stacy, Lacassane Company

Opposes increase to three geese based on the harvest data, would like it to stay as is. Will accept whatever is proposed on ducks

Eric Rue, Calcasieu Charter Service

Doesn't know anyone that hunts that is asking for an increase in geese. Prefers 74/2 on Specks. He stated that Louisiana cannot base hunts the national population numbers. Consideration needs to be taken by the Commission on what was once an 80 percent wintering population number down to 20 percent. Mr. Courville stated that we cannot manage Louisiana Harvest by using National data numbers. LA. is at the end of the Flyway and doesn't get the benefit to see all of the birds out there. Increased hunting pressure is going to happen with a three bird limit. The hunters are more efficient and more skilled in Speckle belly hunting. Fewer birds are in the area, showing up later and leaving earlier and the economic boom in Lake Charles will put more pressure on hunting in the southwest.

Bryan Leach, Delta Waterfowl Regional Director

The majority of their members wants extended split dates and agrees with Eric Rue on speckle belly geese

Leighton Guilbeau, Grand View Lodge

For Splitting season for more days in November, November 7th, how does that affect youth hunt. Mr. Reynolds stated Youth Hunt is exempt

Commissioner Courville made a motion to accept the proposed season dates (below)

West Zone:

November 14 - December 06

December 19 – January 24

Youth Season November 07 and January 31

East Zone:

November 21 - December 6

December 19 – January 31

Youth Season November 14 and February 06

Coastal Zone:

November 07 - December 6

December 19 – January 17

Youth Season October 31 and November 01

All Zones Statewide

White Front Geese

November 07 - December 06

December 19 – February 14

Daily Bag Limit 2

Commissioner Yakupzack asked to comment on the "Speck" situation in Louisiana before a second is made on Commissioner Courville's standing motion. Yakupzack stated he is more of a conservative and has a policy of prudence and not in favor of increasing anything until after a confirmation of an anomaly or not. Can "echo" Mr. Rue's comments on the increased in Speck hunting in southwest Louisiana and a decrease in success in duck hunting in agricultural areas in the same areas. For these reasons, people have become more interested in Speckle bellies.

Yakupzack stated he has a concern in the drastic decrease in population, but also understands that Mr. Reynolds says there is no real evidence to pull back the most liberal options offered. With that said, Yakupzack stated he is opposed to a bag limit increase but can be in support of a number of days increase to avoid a bag limit increase. Yakupzack continued; With all said, we need to be careful with the loss of wintering grounds which is well documented and a study is in order by LDWF of speckle bellies in Louisiana. It is necessary and wants to ask the Department to commence such a study which will investigate several aspects of speckle bellies including but not limited to movements during the winter and throughout migration.

Migration chronology in and out of Louisiana throughout the hunting season, examining habitat use and selection of the birds, assessing landscape level changes to the traditional winter areas. There is a study commenced in Texas by Bart Ballard very similar to that as well as a study in Arkansas by Doug Osborne. This is a great opportunity for this department to have synergy and accomplish synergy with those studies and ours. Commissioner Manuel moved back to the motion on the floor.

Commissioner Yakupzack then stated he was heavily swayed by the people attending the meeting who spoke and respects the fact that we send out a survey as described by Mr. Reynolds as "a very high sample response". Yakupzack continued to explain that his decision is based and heavily swayed by the people in the room who make their livelihood off of this resource and what is stood to gain economically from a longer season. He stated he is again, heavily swayed by this.

Yakupzack asked Commissioner Courville to rethink the motion to a November 07 opening in the Coastal Zone and go with the 81 day season stopping at February 07 as opposed to the 14th.

Commissioner Courville stated he would make that change in his motion.

Commissioner Courville's motion to accept the proposed season dates (below)

West Zone:

November 14 - December 06

December 19 – January 24

Youth Season November 07 and January 31

East Zone:

November 21 - December 6

December 19 – January 31

Youth Season November 14 and February 06

Coastal Zone:

November 07 - December 6

December 19 – January 17

Youth Season October 31 and November 01

All Zones Statewide

White Front Geese

November 07 - December 06

December 19 – February 07

Daily Bag Limit 2

A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Courville and seconded by Commissioner Yakupzack.

Chairman Manuel asked if there were any comments

Jonathon Walker

Should change the west zone to coincide with coastal zone; Instead of three openings, would like to see the East Zone match the first split days
Commissioner Courville said based on Harvest statistics and in the absence of specific bird data for the east, this is the way he interprets the data.

Michael Davis, Hunts in North LA., and Kepler Lake

He spoke with Representative Fannin in reference to moving the line to be more in the west (30 sq miles). Birds stage in the northern lakes that are moving into the coastal zones. The Eastern Zone should move closer to November

Warren Coco, Boat Builder Duck Hunter

"A lot of people here know me; I am a very very active hunter, very avid and I want to highly recommend that yall accept these dates that Larry proposed. We can't make everybody happy in every part of the state. I hunt both in the coastal zone and the east zone and this is probably the best season that's ever been proposed since I've been hunting since I was fourteen years old. Thank you for hearing me."

Chairman Manuel called for a vote

Vote was not unanimous. –A Roll Call vote was conducted by Wendy Brogdon

Pat Manuel Nay

Billy Broussard Yay

Bart Yakupzack Yay

Chad Courville Yay

Ed Swindell Yay

Dan Davis Nay

Vote was 4 Yay, 2 Nay, Motion passed

Commissioner Courville asked if there was a Canada Goose Survey conducted; Mr. Reynolds answered, yes the numbers are going down due to lost grain fields, habitat is not conducive however the flyway population numbers are good

Canada Geese

Change Coastal Zone to November 7

CANADA GEESE:

Coastal Zone:

November 7 – December 6

December 19 - January 31

West Zone:

November 14 – December 6

December 19 – January 31

East Zone:

November 7 – December 6

December 19 – January 31

Daily Limit on Canada geese: 1 per day

Possession limit on Canada geese: 3

There were no other questions or comments heard

A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Yakupzack and seconded by Commissioner Swindell. Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.

Rails and Gallinules

RAILS

November 7 – December 30

KING AND CLAPPER: Daily bag limit 15 in the aggregate, Possession 45.

SORA AND VIRGINIA: Daily bag 25 in the aggregate and possession 75.

GALLINULES:

November 7 – December 30

Daily bag limit 15, Possession limit 45

There were no questions or comments heard

A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Broussard and seconded by Commissioner Courville. Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.

SNIPE:

Coastal Zone:

November 2 – December 6

December 19 – February 28

West Zone:

November 2 - December 6

December 19 - February 28

East Zone:

November 2 – December 6

December 19 – February 28

Daily bag limit 8, Possession limit 24

There were no further comments or questions heard.

A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Courville and seconded by Commissioner Swindell. Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.

(The full text of the Declaration of Emergency is
made a part of the record

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

In accordance with the emergency provisions of R.S. 49:953 of the Administrative Procedure Act, and under the authority of R.S. 56:115, the Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby adopts the following emergency rule.

The hunting season for ducks, coots and geese during the 2015-2016 hunting season shall be as follows:

DUCKS AND COOTS: 60 days

Coastal Zone: November 7 – Dec. 6

December 19 – January 17

West Zone: November 14 – December 6

December 19 - January 24

East Zone: November 21 – December 6

(Including December 19 - January 31

Catahoula Lake)

Youth Waterfowl Weekend – October 31 and November 1 in the Coastal Zone, Nov. 7 and Jan. 30 in the West Zone, November 14 and Feb. 6 in East Zone.

Daily Bag Limits: The daily bag limit on ducks is 6 and may include no more than 4 mallards (no more than 2 of which may be females), 2 canvasback, 1 mottled duck, 1 black duck, 3 wood ducks, 3 scaup, 2 redheads, and 2 pintails.

Daily bag limit on coots is 15.

Mergansers - The daily bag limit for mergansers is 5, only 2 of which may be hooded mergansers.

Merganser limits are in addition to the daily bag limit for ducks.

Possession Limit - The possession limit on ducks, coots and mergansers is three times the daily bag limit.

GEESE:

LIGHT GEESE (SNOW, BLUE and ROSS') and WHITE-FRONTED GEESE

Coastal Zone: November 7 – December 6

(81 days) December 19 – February 7

West Zone: November 7 – December 6

(81 days) December 19 – February 7

East Zone: November 7 – December 6

(81 days) December 19 – February 7

Daily bag limit on light geese (snow, blue and Ross'): 20

Possession limit on light geese (snow, blue and Ross'): None

Daily Limit on white-fronted geese: 2

Possession Limit on white-fronted geese: 6

CANADA GEESE: CLOSED IN THE AREA DESCRIBED BELOW

Coastal Zone: November 7 – December 6

(74 days) December 19 - January 31

West Zone: November 14 – December 6

(67 days) December 19 – January 31

East Zone: November 7 – December 6

(74 days) December 19 – January 31

Daily Limit on Canada geese: 1 per day

Possession limit on Canada geese: 3

The Canada goose Season will be open statewide except for a portion of southwest Louisiana. The closed area is described as follows: Beginning at the Texas State Line, proceeding east along Hwy. 82 to the Calcasieu Ship Channel, then north along the Calcasieu Ship Channel to its junction with the Intracoastal Canal, then east along the Intracoastal Canal to its juncture with LA Hwy. 82, then south along LA Hwy. 82 to its juncture with Parish Road 3147, then south and east along Parish Road 3147 to Freshwater Bayou Canal, then south to the Gulf of Mexico, then west along the shoreline of the Gulf of Mexico to the Texas State Line, then north to the point of beginning at LA Hwy. 82. Open waters of Lake Arthur and the Mermentau River, from the Hwy 14 bridge southward, will also be closed to Canada goose hunting.

CONSERVATION ORDER FOR LIGHT GEESE (SNOW, BLUE AND ROSS'S):

Coastal Zone: December 7 – December 18

February 8 – March 6

West Zone: December 7 - December 18

February 8 - March 6

East Zone: December 7 – December 18

February 8 – March 6

Only snow, blue and Ross's geese may be taken under the terms of the Conservation Order, which allows the use of electronic calls and unplugged shotguns and eliminates the daily bag and possession limits. During the Conservation Order, shooting hours begins one-half hour before sunrise and extends until one-half hour after sunset.

RAILS: November 7 – December 30

KING AND CLAPPER: Daily bag limit 15 in the aggregate, Possession 45.

SORA AND VIRGINIA: Daily bag 25 in the aggregate and possession 75.

GALLINULES: November 7 – December 30

Daily bag limit 15, Possession limit 45

SNIFE:

Coastal Zone: November 2 – December 6

December 19 – February 28

West Zone: November 2 - December 6

December 19 - February 28

East Zone: November 2 – December 6

December 19 – February 28

Daily bag limit 8, Possession limit 24

Shooting Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset, except at the Spanish Lake Recreation Area in Iberia Parish where shooting hours, including the Conservation Order, end at 2 p.m.

EXTENDED FALCONRY SEASONS FOR RAILS AND GALLINULES:

STATEWIDE: November 4 – January 31

(16 days of the total season lengths for rails, gallinules and extended falconry seasons were used during the September teal season.)

EXTENDED FALCONRY SEASONS FOR DUCKS:

COASTAL ZONE: November 4 – January 31

WEST ZONE: November 4 – January 31

EAST ZONE: November 4 – January 31

A Declaration of Emergency is necessary because the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service establishes the framework for all migratory species. In order for Louisiana to provide hunting opportunities to the 200,000 sportsmen, selection of season dates, bag limits and shooting hours must be established and presented to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service immediately.

The aforementioned season dates, bag limits and shooting hours will become effective November 1, 2015 and extend through one-half hour after sunset on March 1, 2016

Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **to set the December 2015 Meeting Date**

A discussion took place and the meeting is set for December 03, 2015 at 1:30pm to be held in Lake Charles, LA., location to be determined.

A motion for approval was made by Commissioner Broussard and seconded by Commissioner Swindell. Chairman Manuel called for a vote and the motion passed with no opposition.



Chairman Manuel announced the next item, **To Hear Public Comments,**

Commissioner Yakupzack asked to make a point of clarity to say he is in favor of the most liberal seasons we can have as long as he is given the appropriate data, studies and investigations to show the actions will not be reactive in the future as opposed to proactive now. Nobody likes to hunt more than him

Commissioner Swindell stated he was resigning from the Commission to take a position on the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Council on August 11th therefore this would be his last Commission meeting
There were no other comments heard.

There being no further business, Chairman Manuel **Adjourned** the meeting.

Pat Manuel, Chairman